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THE REN & STIMPY SHOW™



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What a year it was! The past twelve months were so eventful, both inside and outside the world of comics, that it seemed as though everything that had come before was just the opening act.

New titles, new talents, new technology, new ideas, and new surprises from familiar faces—all proved that the only thing we can take for granted is *change*. The year will go down in comics history as possibly the most turbulent ever, and it already looks as though 1993 will be even more so.

And, in 1992, we said goodbye to a number of special friends, among them William Gaines, Martin Goodman, and Joe Shuster. Without these guys, there wouldn't be any change in our industry, for there wouldn't be a comics industry. Take a moment to remember them fondly, and while you're at it, take a moment to appreciate some of the other founding fathers of comics who are still with us—guys like Ditko, Eisner, Kane, Kirby, Lee, Nodell, Robinson, Siegel, Simon and the rest.

MARVEL AGE went through its share of changes, too, as we tried to create a magazine that would better reflect the tastes and greater sophistication of the audience. With new style, substance, direction and creative talents, we tried to make it the behind-the-scenes publication for the comics fan of the '90s. Have we succeeded? Only you know the answer to that question, and we'd love to hear from you as we contemplate even more changes and improvements for the coming year. In a nutshell—write!

As the holiday season draws to a close, and January brings us the bluster of wintry weather, take the opportunity to look back. Examine the events over the last 365 days, and learn from them. Then look forward, and determine how you will take those lessons and apply them to make life even better, both for you and for the people around you. That's what New Year's is all about.

Happy holidays!

—Steve

(And a special Happy New Year to Bob Sodaro, along with an apology. A typo slipped into issue #120 and, unfortunately, it was Bob's credit for the "10 Years After" feature. Sorry, Bob. We'll be more careful next time.)

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Karen Corbo

UP FRONT

ITEM! X-Men fans can now create their own mutant adventures with the new *X-Men* board game from Pressman. Available in toy stores everywhere, it is a cross between a role-playing game and a standard board game, and includes 18 sculpted game pieces of Marvel's most popular mutants, with dossiers of each containing power ratings and experience levels. The object of the game is to move each character around the board and gain experience points by defeating evil mutant foes. The one who finishes with the most points (without getting killed) wins.

The game also comes with a special limited edition copy of *X-MEN* #11. Featuring the art of Jim Lee and Mark Texeira, this special has a distinct, fifth-color silver cover. Only 10,000 copies of this exclusive edition will be printed.

When Pressman approached Marvel about making a board game of their best-selling book, Marvel's chief concern was how the game represented their characters. "Our job," said Special Projects Associate Editor Tom Brevoort, "was to make sure the game remained true to the spirit of the characters while still being fun to play." To ensure this, Marvel representatives first met with Pressman staff to explain who and what the characters were, then an artist was commissioned to draw three views of each character which served as the models for the game pieces. Finally the finished pieces and rules were shown to Marvel for final approval. The whole process took over a year and a half to complete.

After playing the final version of the game with the Pressman people and his fellow Marvel staffers, Tom was asked how he liked the game. "I think it's really fun," he answered, "but that's only because I won!"





ITEM! Die hard Spider-Man fans are in for a treat. The four Spider-Man holograms that appeared on the covers of **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #365**, **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #90**, **SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #189** and **SPIDER-MAN #26** have been mounted and framed in a special collector's edition plaque. This handsome collectible celebrating Spidey's 30th anniversary features a silver Spider-Man logo and black border that surrounds the four holographic action poses.

Holograms are two dimensional images that appear to have three dimensional depth. Most holograms are created from flat illustrations, which is why many don't always achieve that illusion of depth. The reason these holograms are considered to be among the best ever made is that they were created from actual three-dimension sculptures and not from a drawing.

Available only in select comic and memorabilia shops, the Spider-Man Collector Set is a rare and beautiful commemoration of 30 years of arachnophilia. The set is scheduled to be issued in January, retail priced at \$24.95.

ITEM! For the first time in 45 years comics great Joe Kubert will be illustrating a story for Marvel Comics. Not since Marvel was known as Timely Comics has Joe penciled and inked a job for the company. Now he returns with a twenty-page, two part backup story appearing in **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #7** and **8**.

Joe's return was neither planned nor anticipated. In fact Joe wasn't the artist the editorial office had thought to ask to do the job. **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE** Editor Bobbie Chase had already scheduled the two-part when she started looking for an artist. Interested in trying out new talent, she had several budding illustrators in mind but hadn't decided on which one to hire. Bobbie asked regular **SPIRITS** penciler (and Joe's son) Adam Kubert if he could recommend any other potential candidates. Adam was aware that his father taught a number of promising young art students, so he asked his dad if he knew of anyone who'd be interested. Without missing a beat, Joe replied, "Yes, me."

Amazingly enough, even being considered one of the top artists in the business for almost half a century, Joe Kubert has only worked with one other writer. How did this make **SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE** writer, Howard Mackie, feel? "It's a little intimidating," he joked. "I'm actually nervous — now the story is gonna have to be good!"

SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #7, featuring Joe Kubert's unexpected return to Marvel, is on sale right now. It's not often that a comic book can be called historic, but then again once in 45 years isn't very often.





ITEM! The only way to get the scoop on what Marvel has new for '93 is to read the **MARVEL PREVIEW 1993**. No other publication will have as many in-depth articles and behind the scenes peeks on what Marvel has to offer from January to June than this slick new 48-page magazine.

Produced by many of the same folks who work on **MARVEL AGE**, the **PREVIEW** includes features on the **X-MEN** and **AVENGERS** anniversary plans, the big Spider-Man crossover, **THE INFINITY CRUSADE**, Epic's "Heavy Hitters" and Marvel UK's **MYST-TECH WAR**. Promising to be a feast for the eyes as well as the mind, the **PREVIEW** will take full advantage of the bigger and brighter magazine format with a stylish design using art from the new projects and a cover starring Spider-Man, the X-Men and the Avengers, illustrated by Lee Weeks (**DARE-DEVIL**, **GHOST RIDER: FEAR**).

The **MARVEL PREVIEW 1993** goes on sale in January, and as editor Steve (**MARVEL AGE**) Saffel said, "There's no way to be in the know without it, unless you happen to work at Marvel."

ITEM! The **INFINITY WAR** is over, but for the Silver Surfer, Adam Warlock and writer Jim Starlin, the adventure is just beginning. "Resurrection" is the title of a four part limited series written and penciled by Starlin (**THANOS QUEST**, **INFINITY GAUNTLET**, **INFINITY WAR**) and inked by Terry Austin (although Starlin himself inked issue #1). Beginning next month, this limited series printed on heavyweight, high-gloss paper teams the Silver Surfer and Adam Warlock to find the Surfer's one true love, Shalla Bal.

In the Silver Surfer graphic novel, **HOME-COMING**, Shalla Bal died. In part one of "Resurrection," Warlock tells the Surfer that, when he had possession of the Infinity Gauntlet, he got the distinct impression that she might still be alive. Offering to help the Silver Surfer find his lost love for an undisclosed price, Warlock joins him on a deadly trail that leads them into the realms of both Mistress Death and Mephisto.



Mark's REMARKS



Today I march once more into the line of **fire** to address that most controversial of topics—breaking into the business. And when I say the business, I mean the comics industry.

It never fails—whenever I do a column on the topic, I get mail, mostly negative, most of it accusing me of being a self-satisfied pessimist who enjoys dampening the dreams of the talented. Not guilty. I am a restless explainer of things who loves to share what I know with a mass audience. If what I have to explain is not happy for one and all, I fear I am obliged to tell it as I see it.

Breaking in...hundreds of people have done it, thousands of people have wanted to do it but, for various reasons, didn't. Of the hundreds who have found a way to make a living doing comic books, no two people's stories of how they broke in are exactly the same. But there are a lot of similarities, and the similarities often begin with a person's basic character traits.

The way I see it, the most important qualities a person needs are creativity, perseverance, versatility, perseverance, willingness to work hard, perseverance, willingness to take criticism, perseverance, sense of humor, perseverance, and sheer love for what you're doing. Perhaps you can tell which I think is most important. Without the "p" word, you won't last long enough to show anybody you possess any of the other attributes.

The list above is what you need to *break in*. Once you've *made it* in, however, I would then rate "sheer love for what you're doing" the highest. As a veteran writer of more than 300 comic books, I can tell you that there are times, usually late at night, when you *hate* the story you're working on, *hate* your boss for imposing deadlines, and *hate* yourself for not being quicker, or more facile, or deeper, or whatever. When all this hate is robbing you of the will to work, what are you going to do? What can get you back on track? What will bring your despair under control? My answer—the love of the medium (comics) and genre (super heroes).

When I reach my wit's end and just can't continue in the face of writing adversity, I stop, get up, go to the shelves, and pull down some of my favorite comics. I only mean to page through them, but I soon find myself reading them again and, without realizing it, I discover what's going to make me go back and face my word processor again: I *love* this stuff, I love being part of it, even when it's late, even when I have intensive deadlines, even when I can't make every detail of a story come together as wonderfully as I would like.

If you can't relate in some way to these feelings, maybe the comics industry is not really something you want to throw your life into. I've got a great exercise for all of you aspiring comic bookers. Get out a pencil and paper and take this little aptitude test.

PERSEVERANCE PERSEVERANCE PERSEVERANCE

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE IN THE COMICS INDUSTRY?

☐ Y ☐ N Do you take criticism well, extracting the important points and incorporating them into your thought processes about your work?

☐ Y ☐ N Are you willing to be brutally honest with your own work, compare it to, not just the worst in the field ("I can do better than him!"), but the best?

☐ Y ☐ N Do you like doing homework—sitting by yourself for long periods of time and doing the same thing?

☐ Y ☐ N Do you like to read—not just comics, but everything you can get your hands on? Do you love the medium beyond the understanding of anyone around you?

☐ Y ☐ N Are you a keen observer of life? Do you make notes or sketches of real life—people, things, situations?

☐ Y ☐ N Do you like to do things over and over till

you get them right? Are you seldom pleased with whatever you do the first time?

☐ Y ☐ N Do you know how to take rejection as a learning experience, turning it into fuel for further creative endeavor?

☐ Y ☐ N Are you willing to make long, sobering explorations through the unexamined reaches of your mind, trying to dredge up the "juice" that enables you to go on in the face of a difficult creative process?

☐ Y ☐ N Are you willing to make sacrifices for your dreams, put yourself in economic and emotional jeopardy to make your bid for your shot at the big time if you find that's what it takes?

☐ Y ☐ N Do you feel the constant urge to convert your experiences into works of art or fiction? Is this urge so strong that, even if you didn't find a way to get paid for doing your art or stories, you would do them anyway?

Scoring: 8-10 yes, you may have what it takes. 5-7, you may have what it takes if you're very lucky. 1-4, you'd better start thinking of what you really want to do with your life.



So how'd you all do? Don't feel obliged to write and tell me. I just want to help you judge for yourself. You know, I would love to be everyone's big brother in the biz, answer your questions, give critiques to your stories, give you tips customized to your own experience. But I can't. There just isn't enough time for me to personally encourage every single person I see with a modicum of talent and do everything else I have to do as a Marvel staffer, a freelance writer, a comic collector, a husband, and a father.

While I dearly remember what it was like to be a fan out there, longing to find my way inside, **I somehow knew even back then** that no one cared if I got into the business except me. Therefore, I realized I couldn't really count on anyone to help me get in except myself, and by trying to impose myself upon some professionals who seemed accessible or whose work I respected, I'd probably just annoy them and hurt my chances to become one of them.

Since this is the last time I hope to write on this topic for a while, I would like to leave those of you who are still with me some special inside tips on breaking in, culled from my experience on both the inside and out:

1. Don't send stories to writers about the characters they write. Many, like myself, will return them unread in order not to be unconsciously influenced by someone else's ideas and insights. A writer's stories must be his or her own.

2. Never send character ideas to anyone. Marvel hires writers and artists who make up characters. We don't buy characters from people who don't already work for us.

3. Make personal contact with writers and editors at conventions or store appearances, and make a good impression on them so that, when they receive something in the mail by you, they'll be able to put a face with the name.

4. Never make a follow-up phone call to see if someone

got your submission. It's pushy and annoying. They'll respond when they respond, if they respond.

5. Be humble and polite. It goes a long way with a lot of people.

6. Develop a sense of humor, preferably one that's not dependent upon putting down others. (You never know when the person you hope to amuse identifies strongly with your putdown target.) Everyone likes to be amused, even people who you want to hire you.

7. While you ultimately want to become as versatile as possible, hone just one of your skills at a time. A portfolio showing good penciling samples is better than one showing mediocre writing, penciling, inking, coloring, lettering samples all in one.

8. Submit your work only to people who can buy your work. I, for example, edit no titles and thus cannot buy any work. Even if I loved your stuff, I could not force anybody to hire you. That's not the way the Marvel system operates.

9. Pencillers: Only submit your absolute best work. If you have to explain, "Oh, this is a year old—I'm better than that now," don't include it. Better by far to have five great pages than ten pages, some of them mediocre.

10. Writers: Don't send full scripts (art directions, captions, and dialog all included). Don't send multi-part stories. Don't do stories that resolve or complicate a book's ongoing continuity. Don't send stories featuring characters who don't have their own books. Don't send plots starring your own characters. Do send plot springboards, up to five at a time if you want. Do send one-part stories that can fit anywhere in continuity. Do send stories that could be bought for books we currently publish. Do send us comics featuring your published work.

That's it. As unself-satisfied and non-pessimistic as I can muster. Till next time, dream any dream you wish, but strive to be worthy of that dream.

BOSSMEN by Rick Parker

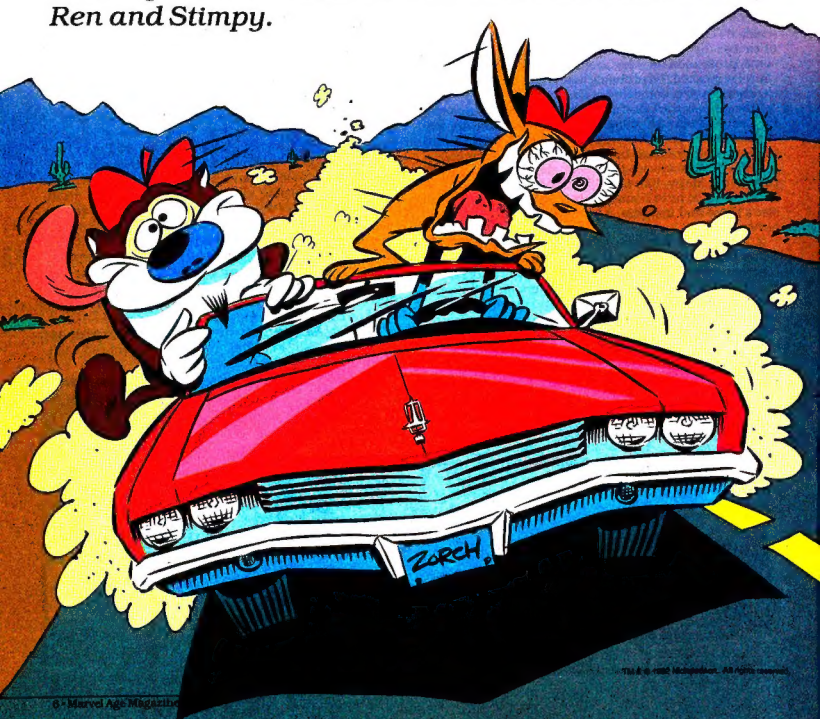
— Mark Gruenwald



The New Team On the Block

Think of Marvel and you think of great "Team" comics. The Marvel Universe *began* with a team book — **FANTASTIC FOUR**. Since then, teams have been a large and important part of Marvel's popularity, from the universe-spanning adventures of **THE AVENGERS** to the mutant mania of **THE X-MEN**.

Marvel has added a very special team. A team known and respected worldwide. A different team. The team of *Ren and Stimpy*.



That's right, Ren and Stimpy, heroes of NICKELODEON's cartoon capers (the NICKTOONS), the most avant-garde animated characters ever created! How did such bizarre creatures make their way to the Halls of Marvel? And now that they *have*, what can innocent readers expect from them?

Editor Fabian Nicieza explained, "We'd been working with NICKELODEON to find a project we could do together. We first talked about a sort of 'Nickelodeon Magazine' anthology of characters and ideas from various Nick shows. . . .

"That was when I first heard about the whole idea," said Dan Slott, writer of the new REN AND STIMPY SHOW title. "Fabian was trying to get this Nickelodeon Magazine together, and he talked to Mike Kazaleh and I about working on it. I had just seen THE REN AND STIMPY SHOW and was crazy about it — I wanted to do it — bad! I went after it like a madman, pestering Fabian until he told me to go ahead."

"It's just as well," Fabian added. "When THE REN AND STIMPY SHOW turned out to be such a breakthrough hit, something that appealed to both adults and kids, we decided to hold up doing the anthology, and start our Nickelodeon association with a REN AND STIMPY SHOW comic — and thanks to Dan, we already had a team in place and ready to go!"

"We're treating it just like the TV show," Slott put in. "Each issue has two stories separated by a fake ad or something similar. For example, the first issue had an ad pushing Ren's candidacy for President of the United States!" He chuckled. "And I've just finished a piece on 'Stimpy's Hygiene Hints.'"

"Each issue is then finished off with some kind of closing joke — you know, the way they use things like 'Stimpy's Nose Goblins' on the TV show!"

"The first issue," Fabian pointed out, "even had an extra-special bonus! It's a REN AND STIMPY SHOW scratch and sniff 'air fouler!' He laughed. "You scratch it and get a pleasant color — and aroma — wafting through your fingertips! A comics first!"

THE REN AND STIMPY SHOW has another comics first — a reversal of trends. Some comic artists like Mike Ploog, Frank Miller, and Jim Steranko, have gone on to work in the movies. Breaking the pattern is artist Mike Kazaleh who started as an animator and then went into comics! "For years, most of my 'money' work was animation," Kazaleh explained. "I worked with Ralph Bakshi on the *Mighty Mouse* TV series, then did some TV specials with him, like *Christmas in Tattertown*. Most recently I did work on *Cool World*."

"I did all kinds of things for Bakshi — layouts, backgrounds, special effects — just about anything that was there to be done, although the bulk of my work was as animator and designer. "I even did some work on *The Simpsons*. Of course, I was also one of the first people to get out of that," He said laughing. "Good move, eh?"

"All the while," he continued, "I kept puttering around in the comics world, working for all kinds of companies, although never for very long — I guess my longest comic run was on *The Adventures of Captain Jack* — I did 12 issues of that."

"Somewhere during that time, Fabian saw my stuff and got me to do some work for Marvel — I did 'Teddy Dustbin' for EPIC LITE — I even ended up doing some pencilling on the second Roger Rabbit graphic novel, 'Resurrection of Judge Doom.'"

"I was doing some work for Fabian at the same time," writer Dan Slott added, "and when some deadline problems cropped up, Mike and I were asked to step in and do the final issue of the MIGHTY MOUSE comic. At the last minute, of course, I did a story in which MIGHTY MOUSE appeared on the David Letterman show. Fabian liked that!"



Fabian agreed. "That showed me that Dan had an — well, call it an *interesting* sense of humor. He's a strange young man, with strange ideas — and, of course, that makes him perfect for **THE REN AND STIMPY SHOW**!"

"I see **THE REN AND STIMPY SHOW** as the ultimate opportunity for me," Slott said. "Most of my experience at Marvel has been in non-series work, back-up stories for annuals, stuff in **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS**, that sort of thing. Now I finally have a chance to spread out — show what I can do!"

THE REN AND STIMPY SHOW will give Slott and Kazaleh that chance — and a challenge — how to reproduce the kind of humor that depends, as all animated cartoons depend, on things that cannot be reproduced in comic form.

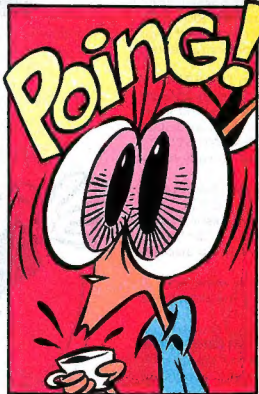
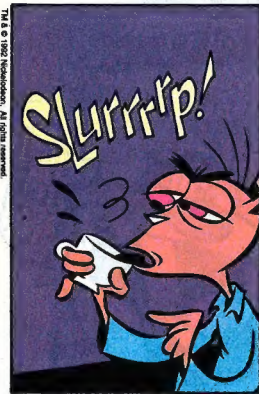
page. We'll translate the *franticness* of the cartoon onto the printed page, and if the reader translates the *sound*, it'll be just fine.

Writer Slott agreed. "I'm trying to get the same feel the TV show has. I know this is a different medium, and I want to give the reader the same sort of experience, the same specific unit of entertainment that an episode seems to give."

Hey, think of it this way: after you see the episode, it's over! Gone! But with the comic, you can read it again and again! Each issue is 22-to-25 pages — that's a page a day to wash away those Ren and Stimpy blues!"

And what kinds of stories will the comic tell?

"Well," Slott revealed, "Of course I'll be using the same lovable back-up characters that you've seen on TV: The



"There are things we can't do," Editor Nicieza agreed. "The color on TV gives them a little bit of a 3-D effect that we can't match, and they can do a lot of things with stretch and squash."

Artist Kazaleh agreed. "I had to learn to use one drawing instead of a whole stack to get an idea across — you know, in cartoons they can show a face going through four emotions in a second — I can't do that in a single panel," he said.

"The key is to try to communicate the story with a few pictures — rather than a lot. It's a tough thing to do. The writer is thinking of the story in terms of motion — the same way he would if he were writing a cartoon, but I have to change that into flat pages. That means that I sometimes have to cut some material out entirely, and expand on other things. "Things I would do in animation with timing, takes, and the like, I can only suggest now," he added.

"You know," he said, sighing, "When I started doing comics, I tried to make them too much like films, and that got me into trouble. Now I'm trying to adjust my style so I can do comics as comics — not as films with a lot of missing scenes."

"Mike's done a great job on this," Nicieza commented, "And one of the things I can guarantee is that the comic does simulate the *manic-ness* of the cartoon!"

Of course, there is one aspect of TV cartoons that absolutely cannot be simulated on the printed page: "The voices," Nicieza said. "They're an integral part of Ren and Stimpy's characters. We kind of hope that the reader will just 'hear' those voices in their heads when they read the book. That's what I do. It helps create the illusion of a cartoon right there in front of them on the

Horse, Muddy Mudkipper, Powdered Toast Man — the whole gang."

And Ren and Stimpy?

"They get around," Slott assured. "In issue #1, we opened with them living a life of crime. Then, in the second story, we saw them as Commander Höek and Cadet Stimpy, fighting the dreaded Space Yak!"

"Issue #2 gave us some trouble. I started it with Ren and Stimpy as a couple of pizza delivery boys, but that wasn't exotic enough, so I moved the story to Canada. You know, logging country! Where they're selling Beaver Pizzas! I wanted to make the comic even more outrageous than the TV version! I wanted to push the envelope of humor as close to the edge as possible, going further and further until someone, somewhere screams: **NO! ENOUGH!**"

"Issue #3," he continued, "was our big Christmas issue. Stimpy wanted a Log, but Ren, of course, couldn't afford it. The back-up story that month was the most violent one I've been able to come up with so far — Ren and Stimpy became the dictators of a South American country!"

"In #4 we do an Espresso Bar story, with Stimpy becoming a beat poet," Slott chuckled. "You know, as a sort of running joke with myself, I try to figure a way to kill Ren and Stimpy at least once per book. I wanted to see how far I could go before Fabian stopped me," he explained. "Well, he stopped me on #4, and I had to change things so they would not die at the end of the story!"

He continued. "Plans for issues #5, #6 and #7 haven't been set in stone yet, but our ideas for #5 include another Commander Höek and Cadet Stimpy

story, where our two daring space heroes have to go undercover as Croco-men from Planet Zed. The second story, "Stimpy's Big Surprise". . . well, it's a surprise. Don't want to give away too much.

"On the boards for #6 is the first Marvel/Nickelodeon crossover," Slott revealed. In the lead story, 'Clash of Titans, Breakfast of Champions,' Powdered Toast Man gets turned into a cereal offender by an evil genius's mind control ray and has to fight Spider-Man. Yeah, Spider-Man. Got a problem with that? Huh?"

Calmer, he added, The framing sequence for #7 is a 'Yak Shaving Day' telethon to raise cash for pre-pubescent yaks. The main features will include an *On the Waterfront/Rocky* story where Stimpy enters the world of boxing as Kid Stimpy. In the backup feature, Ren and Stimpy get their pelts stolen by a furrier and are 'Naked, Angry, and Armed.'"

THE REN AND STIMPY SHOW, the newest, and most dangerous, Marvel team book. Excelsior, indeed!

The Nicktoon

We asked Sandie Lowenstein, Nickelodeon's Vice President of Consumer Products, to fill us in on the background of *The Ren and Stimpy Show* TV series. This is what she told us:

"Nickelodeon's original mission was to be the Channel for Kids — completely. It was to be a kids' variety channel, with game shows, sitcoms, news shows, and, of course, animation. However, we didn't want to have the usual animation — driven by toy companies and used mainly to sell things to viewers. We wanted something else. Something different.

shows on the networks. When *The Ren and Stimpy Show* became as popular as it did, we [included] it in a two hour prime time block from 8 to 10 PM on Saturday.

"*The Ren and Stimpy Show* turned into a bit of a surprise for Nickelodeon. We expected the show to be popular with kids — after all, we are the network for kids, but we never expected the response we got from adults! We were delighted, of course, but we weren't prepared.

"Overnight it seemed, we found ourselves deluged with letters from college kids, from fraternities all over the country who wanted to do parties with a *Ren and Stimpy Show* theme! We weren't quite sure how to handle that — and now, a year later, we're starting to get the same kind of response from overseas. It took about a year to get things going over there, but now we're starting to get a response — and it is a very positive one!

"We hope to have new episodes airing either in late October or early November. Bob Camp, after taking the helm, immediately went heavily into production. He found new, enlarged office space, got completely staffed, and now he's running like gangbusters! I'm sure we'll get all 13 of the episodes we've been expecting — he's working day and night — and we'll get those episodes to you as soon as they're finished!

"We expect *The Ren and Stimpy Show* to be on the air for a long, long time!"

Beyond TV

Nickelodeon tries to avoid shows oriented around toys — their philosophy is to entertain, not to sell. Still, with public demand at a fever pitch, and with the success of



"We had decided to produce several totally new and different animation series for the channel. Our vice president in charge of animation, Vanessa Coffey, talked to many, many animators — and not just animators, literally anyone who had a new and original character in their heads dying to get out. We wanted to do creative visions that the networks wouldn't ever use!

"Eventually, Vanessa picked out three concepts for the new project — *Doug*, *Rugrats* and *The Ren and Stimpy Show* — she's been very 'hands-on' with the Nickelodeon side of things — even bought a second house in California so she could be right up close to the action.

"**NICKTOONS** debuted in August of 1991 on Sunday mornings — a time period that was always left barren for kids, being dominated by news and current events

THE REN AND STIMPY SHOW, they went into high-gear on the production of new toys, souvenirs, and other merchandise. Sandie Lowenstein, initially brought in as a consultant, and now a full-fledged vice president in charge of consumer products, elaborated.

"Most of our products are in response to the letters we get telling us how much people love Ren and Stimpy and the other Nicktoon characters. Christmas is coming and, naturally enough, we want to have a lot of new merchandise available. However, we aren't going to put out 'everything imaginable,' that's not the Nickelodeon philosophy. Rather, we're going to concentrate on a couple of specific areas.

"For the gamers, there will be a variety of electronic games, both for the standard Nintendo and the Gameboy from THQ. At the same time, Parker Brothers will do sev-

eral standard board games, if anything relating to *The Ren and Stimpy Show* can be thought of as standard. All of them should be out for Christmas.

"We've arranged for two different types of plush figures — toy figures, from Mattel, and a line of unique gift collectibles from Dakin. Additionally, in November, we'll debut both talking and 'rude noise' Ren and Stimpy dolls from Mattel. I don't know how much I want to say about those just yet, but, to put it delicately, the 'rude noise' Ren will have a little... gas problem. And Stimpy, being a cat, will have a hairball in his mouth that you have to pull to make him say different things.

"We'll follow that up early next year with a line of *The Ren and Stimpy Show* figures. They'll come in special costumes themed on specific episodes — for example, there are Commander Höek and Cadet Stimpy figures from "Space Madness," as well as Dr. Stupid, and other easily identifiable characters.

"Dakin will expand their line from the plush toys I mentioned earlier to add a line of lapel pins, key chains, pencil erasers, little figurines — the kind of thing that make great party-favors or small gifts.

"Naturally, there will be *The Ren and Stimpy Show* publications. The new comic from Marvel I assume you know about, but there will also be several of *The Ren and Stimpy Show* adventure books from Putnam — good for young (and adult) readers. Putnam will also be doing a couple of Rugrat books.

"Welch Publishing will do a one-shot magazine called *The Ren and Stimpy Show Exposed* (now on sale). It'll cover everything you ever wanted to know — and some things that you didn't — about the making of *The Ren and Stimpy Show*. We'll tell you all the show's secrets! I know that you can't wait!

"There'll be a large line of watches — several of them are due out anytime now — they're wonderful watches, nine different for *The Ren and Stimpy Show*, alone, covering all their personas, with different features, including one with a very special pop-out face!

"And finally, there'll be posters and calendars and postcards — all kinds of illustrative material.

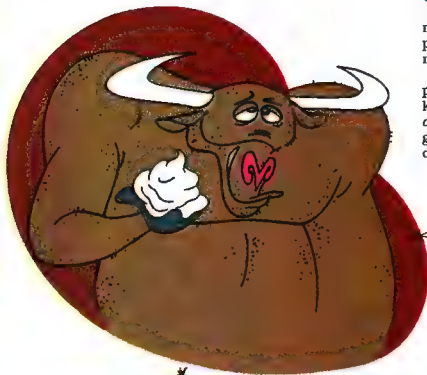
"We're just now starting to get an idea of what might happen. Putnam's *Postcards over the Edge* just came out, and out of 400 kid's titles that the industry tracks, it came in #5 in its first week!

"Of course, Ren and Stimpy will appear, in person, at Universal studios, both in Florida and California, and once the Christmas rush is over, and we can settle down to think things over — who knows what will happen.

"With luck, it'll all make you Happy, happy!"

Joy, joy.

— Doug & Pam Murray



by Joey Cavalieri, Arthur Nichols
and Ken Lopez

MARVEL 2099

UHT-
OH.

PICKING UP SOMETHING
ON PUBLIC EYE MONITOR
14C6D IN SUB-SECTOR 2B

BETTER DISPATCH
SOMEONE THERE
RIGHT AWAY.

SOME KIND OF
VIGILANTE... OR ROGUE
COP... HAS ARRIVED ON
THE SCENE.

HE'S ONLY
GOING TO
MAKE
MATTERS
WORSE.

AFTER
ALL...

...WHAT CAN A NON-
UNION GUY DO THAT
WE CAN'T?



AFTER THE MyS-TECH WARS:

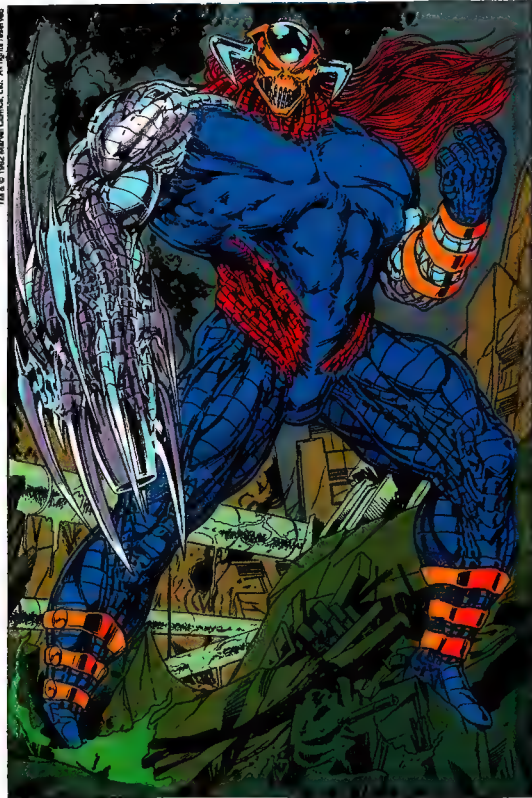
The folks at Marvel UK have good reason to be cheerful: their distinctive line of British super heroes is more popular than ever, and the latest addition, a four part limited series dubbed **MyS-TECH WARS** (see **MARVEL PREVIEW** for the full story) looks to be their hottest title yet. However, the story does not end there.

MyS-TECH WARS is, the long anticipated showdown between the forces of good, represented by the Marvel UK heroes (led by Dark Angel) and a fair sprinkling of Marvel America's finest, against the magical powers of the omnipresent **MyS-TECH** organization, mystic masters of high-tech villainy. Penned by Dan (**DEATH'S HEAD**) Abnett and pencilled by Bryan (**SHE HULK**) Hitch, the series is intended, among other things, to showcase the British heroes alongside their American counterparts.

One of the driving forces at Marvel UK is their enthusiasm. Ask series Editor John Freeman why Dan Abnett was selected as the writer, and words of praise come tumbling out, "Dan's writing has been absolutely tremendous on **DEATH'S HEAD** and he has done very well for us. He is also familiar with the way Marvel America works and, having been an editor at Marvel UK, that enables him to be a sort of freelance editor in many ways on how the plotlines are going for the tie-in books, and to direct the writers accordingly." His comment on Bryan Hitch's artwork is a model of brevity but equally telling: waving a copy of the stunning cover to **MyS-TECH WARS** #1, he simply asked, "How could anyone not choose an artist who draws this well?"

The climax of a year's careful planning, **MyS-TECH WARS** marks the advent of a new stage in the Marvel UK sub-universe. Marvel UK Editor in Chief Paul Neary explained, "It's phase two of our involvement with the Marvel characters. The American heroes were being alerted to the evil empire of **MyS-TECH** through the fact that British characters were coming onto the scene — for instance, Motormouth was picked up as a burst of energy by **SHIELD** when she first started teleporting. Dark Angel was picked up on Professor X's scanners as a possible mutant, and so on."

With the heroes' growing awareness of **MyS-TECH**'s operations, a confrontation became both inevitable and desirable. "Right from the beginning I knew there would have to be a showdown between **MyS-TECH** and the American heroes, who were just not going to go on tolerating this global menace. It would have been unfeasible to continue stringing readers along with all these obviously aggravating events occurring in Britain — we would have lost cred-



ability if we hadn't dealt with it head on."

If the first phase of Marvel UK's entry into the Marvel universe was concerned with establishing the characters and their basis in **MyS-TECH**'s mystical technology, the new phase draws the heroes into a common awareness of their situation and their adversary.

MyS-TECH Unearthed

Paul Neary stressed that life after the **MyS-TECH WARS** will go on much as before. "In terms of the way that the series will affect things, it won't change the major face of any of the books or the way that anything interacts on a major level. I look at the series as more of a graphic novel — it isn't going to be a watershed for all our characters, where they're all going to come out the other side looking different or anything like that."

However, that does not mean there will be no lasting effect. Neary explained, "Something very, very major happens, but it's a simple thing. Up until this point no one has known who **MyS-TECH** is and what they are up to. The lasting change that **MyS-TECH WARS** will bring about will be in the consciousness of a select handful of our major super heroes: at the end of the limited series our heroes are a lot wiser about **MyS-TECH** while **MyS-TECH** are no wiser about anything else — in fact, they don't know the War has happened. That will prove very important."

Not all the Marvel heroes will remember, as John Freeman pointed out, "During the course of **MyS-TECH WARS**, certain Marvel characters will encounter people who remember more about what takes place during the limited series than others. We will have a situation, for example, where the Warheads encounter Death's Head and make their peace (having been enemies since **WARHEADS** #7). But the Warheads won't remember the events that brought them together, whereas Death's Head will, and thinks they have made friends — so far as he is concerned, everything is sweetness and light. So when he encounters them again, he is going to be very surprised when Colonel Liger and company open up and try to blow him to pieces!"

Having unearthed **MyS-TECH**'s sordid stratagems, the heroes will choose not to do anything, because Dark Angel will realize the vast web of evil is too complex to be unraveled by simple means. "It's a long, long job to gradually dismantle their empire — you have to do it from the outside inwards. You can't just go and kill them: first of all, they are immortal, and second of all, they leave mystical links to the fabric of crea-

MARVEL UK LOOKS TO THE FUTURE



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tion, which is impossible to attack in that simple way," added Neary.

MyS-TECH WARS has been designed to clarify many things for the readers. "The series focuses everything that we have been trying to do with **MyS-TECH**, in order to go deeply into the **MyS-TECH** board (who they are, what they are, etc.) in a way that we haven't been able to do before — they have sat in the background as grey eminences that we have been saying are powerful, but we have never proved it. Now we are going to be able to see firsthand where everything fits in. So, as a clarifying gesture, it's extremely good value for money for everyone who's interested in what we're trying to do, because there will be more information in those four books than probably we have released piecemeal through all the pages we have done up to now."

Neary does not intend **MyS-TECH's** state of ignorance to last, however. "At some point after the limited series, there will be some record somewhere that wasn't quite erased, that tips off one of the **MyS-TECH** board members about this gigantic conflagration he was involved in, even though he has no memory of it. The obsession with finding that out becomes really important — it will give a new plot motif where he vows to make it work better next time, and he is trying to find out what went wrong."

The New Team Book

The most visible consequence of **MyS-TECH WARS** will be a regular monthly comic book due out in June, featuring the principal British heroes from the limited series. "Those core characters, who have a memory of

what happened, comprise a very bizarre group," Neary admitted. "We are going to have a group book with those characters in it. By the very nature of the characters, it is going to be an odd one."

Neary plans to sidestep continuity problems between the new title and the individual members' ones by adopting Marvel US practice. "I like the idea of being slightly out of continuity with the members' own titles, in the same way **THE AVENGERS** is with **CAPTAIN AMERICA**." Unlike **THE AVENGERS**, however, membership will be initially limited to established heroes with their own titles, "Unless any minor characters from **MyS-TECH WARS** turn out to be big fan favorites, in which case we will respond to any feedback we get. That happened to us in the **DEATH'S HEAD II** limited series — we invented some alternative middle-aged versions of Spider-Man, Dr. Strange, Daredevil and the Punisher in dead-end timeline, and because the response to them was quite amazing we have reintroduced them. That was not something we had planned."

Neary promises restricted rations of **MyS-TECH**. "**MyS-TECH** are around, as they should be, but not everything that we do is relentlessly due to **MyS-TECH**." To emphasize the point, Neary stresses the as-yet-unnamed group book won't bear a **MyS-TECH** related title.

Beyond that, Marvel's plans for the book remain fluid, although Neary is full of ideas as to the directions it might take. "It would be quite nice if the group members were to make a pact to meet every so often in order to deal with some aspect of something which is cosmic or which has nothing to do with **MyS-TECH**. I wouldn't mind if, for instance, it was the guide character in **DARK ANGEL** who took them all aside and suggested it. We have got some plots in at the moment for where the group book is going, and we haven't made a final decision on exactly what is happening with it long term."

Neary confirmed that Marvel UK has several possible related ventures up its collective sleeve, awaiting the editorial yea or nay, as well as five confirmed unrelated projects due out over the next six months in addition to the brand new **GENETIX** limited series. (Titles so far announced include **BLOOD SEED**, **SHADOW RIDERS**, **WILD THING**, **BLACKAXE** and **SUPER SOLDIERS**.) There may also be annuals in the distinctive British style. Thus, it is apparent that, even after the **MyS-TECH WARS** have ended, there will be no rest in the cards for the heroes of the Marvel UK Universe, for the foreseeable future.

— Alan Woolfcombe

Stan's SOAP BOX

Hi, Heroes! In my never-ending quest to increase your fund of knowledge, thus making you wiser, wittier human beings, I've decided to devote this month's Soapbox to a subject that has rarely been covered in MARVEL AGE.

Ask anybody what today's mighty, multi-faceted Marvel Comics are famous for and the answer will inevitably be "super heroes!" And that would be totally correct! But, long years ago there might have been a different answer, equally correct. And therein lies our tale!

Long before the FANTASTIC FOUR burst upon the comicbook world, heralding the start of the Marvel Super Hero Age, we produced a plethora of different comic books in many different genres. You wouldn't believe how many war titles and westerns and monster mags we turned out, not to mention a ton of romance tales and cops & robbers sagas — and especially funny animal books, mixed-up teenage adventures and funky parody editions. That last batch, the comedy stuff, is the subject I've been leading up to, in my usual convoluted way!

When we were in the heyday of our humor mags, we divided them into different categories. They were what we called the teen-age titles like MILLIE THE MODEL and NELLIE THE NURSE (even in those days we kept getting into ruts!), plus WILLIE, GEORGIE, and JEANIE (Whenever we thought of a first name, it seemed to magically turn into a comicbook!).

Then there was another category, the so-called animated mags, featuring funny (at least we hoped so) talking animals. Thinking back over some of those titles now, I can't believe we were serious when we dreamed them up. Wouldja believe SILLY SEAL & ZIGGY PIG? Or how about POSTY & LOLLY? (Posty was a pelican and Lolly an elephant — or maybe it was the other way around!) We also had an endless string of more mundane titles like CRAZY COMICS, SUPER RABBIT, JOKER COMICS and we were the first to publish MIGHTY MOUSE COMICS! Of course, there were also the satirical comics like SNAFU, CRAZY, RIOT and NOT BRAND ECCH!

For some nutty reason, comicbook artists and writers really get a boot out of parodying their own creations, which is why, throughout the years, Marvel has always managed to do some magazine of that type, including today's WHAT THE?!

Finally, we published another favorite category of mine, the wacky photo-caption books. (To prove they were my favorites, I wrote 'em all myself!) These were books of photos with crazy captions or dialogue balloons, such as MONSTERS UNLIMITED, MONSTERS TO LAUGH WITH (photos from old monster movies) and YOU DON'T SAY (mainly photos of every celebrity we could get our hands on).

Over the years I've been asked why humor seems to have faded in comics. Strangely enough, I don't think it has. The problem is, there's a physical limit to how many magazines a company can produce, and when our super heroes became so hot, we had to devote the bulk of our time and talents to their high-flyin' exploits. However, you may remember that we did manage to include a lot of humor in the doings of our costumed cavorters such as Spider-Man and the FF (the Thing was often voted the funniest character in comics). In fact, even today,

titles such as SHE-HULK have achieved great success in combining humor with far-out adventure. And hey, instead of mourning comedy as a dying art, just latch onto a copy of Sergio Aragones' GROO and try to keep a straight face.

Personally, I think people are into humor as much today as they ever were — there will always be a segment of the reading public that wants a book to laugh with. But, since the greatest appeal seems to be in the super hero adventure stories, it seems to me that the best way for humor to survive (at least for now) is within the framework of those same super hero tales. Think of it, weren't there some great humorous moments in movies like LETHAL WEAPON, DIE HARD and TERMINATOR? Didn't those comedic bits help inject a note of realism? Isn't life itself filled with irony and wry humor? Do any of us ever get through a day without some sort of symbolic pratfall?



In closing, I beg you to shed no tears for the departed heyday of the funny comicbooks. They haven't really left us for good. They never will. Don't believe me? Just ask Ren and Stimpy!

(Of course, they'd probably say, in their own inimitable way, "SE non e vero, e ben trovato!")

Excelsior!

Stan

- Stan Lee

OPERATION MARVEL

On Sunday, October 4, a Marvel team traveled to Homestead, Florida with 150,000 Marvel Comics and accompanied by the Amazing Spider-Man. As part of a Miami Dolphins Tailgate Party coordinated by Miami's WIOD Radio, the team set out to provide a little light to the estimated 60,000 children left homeless by Hurricane Andrew.

Hurricane Andrew cut a path through Southern Florida on August 24, and went on to slam into Louisiana. A week later Hurricane Iniki had the same effect on the Hawaiian Island of Kauai. Although the storms passed some time ago, the immeasurable damage that resulted will make donations of non-perishable food, toys, household items, and baby supplies necessary for as long as two years. In response to the needs of the people living in the affected areas, Marvel instituted a program called Marvel Aid.

Immediately following Hurricane Andrew, Marvel representatives Lou Bank and Skip Deitz were in direct contact with retailers in Florida and Louisiana to ask what they could do to help. Although suffering from the damage themselves, most store owners asked for help for their neighbors. Based on the inspiration generated by these dealers, and by Steve Ginsberg of Claude's Comics in Pennsylvania (who raised six tons of food in his store in two weeks), a specially hired Marvel consultant began to implement two programs designed to provide long range aid, and one very special relief event: the Marvel Aid Relief supply Drive, the Marvel Aid Fundraiser T-shirt, and the comic giveaway in Homestead, Florida.

As of November 1, local comic shops displayed the Marvel Aid poster designating each store as a relief center where customers can drop off food and supplies, ask about the relief drive, and ask what else can be done to help. One way to participate is to purchase the Marvel Aid T-shirt. All

of Marvel's profits from these shirts will go directly to the Salvation Army Hurricane Relief Fund. The two-sided T-shirt, produced in cooperation with Comic Images, features The Incredible Hulk, Wolverine, Captain America, Spider-Man, Iron-Man, and several other characters doing their part in the relief effort.

The third phase of the Marvel Aid project began when Marvel representatives and volunteers from Miami's Charlie's Comics, BAM Comics, and Comic Quest, as well as Claude's Comics in Pennsylvania, set out on October 4 to take 500 cases of comics to the children in South Florida. The road to Homestead was filled with scenes of destruction to which television coverage could not do justice. The entire city was in ruins. Concrete utility poles were snapped in half, huge shopping malls were reduced to rubble, those homes that were not totally destroyed were without windows and roofs, and in the center was a tent city to house the residents of Homestead.

The U.S. Marines met immediate housing needs by building and operating a refugee camp, but the suffering still showed in the faces of the residents. Families occupied their tents with what was salvaged from their homes and what was provided by donations. The children had lost their houses, schools, toys and pets. Their faces brightened, however, with the arrival of the truckload of Marvel Comics.

Escorted by National Guard and Police Officials, the tractor trailer arrived at tent city about 9:00 AM Sunday morning, and by 10:00 the word had spread. Spider-Man autographed books as volunteers distributed comics to a seemingly endless line of children. When the crowd died down a little it was the Marines' turn to receive a few comics for themselves. One soldier commented that it had been quite a while since they had any entertainment.



ON AUGUST 24th,

HURRICANE ANDREW CUT A PATH THROUGH SOUTHERN FLORIDA...

AID

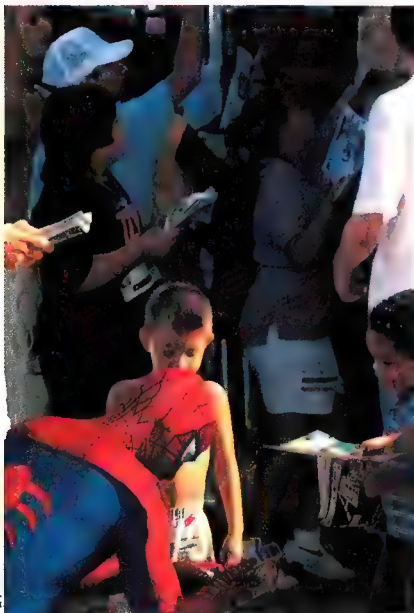


Photographs by Gary Guzzo.



(Previous pages) Spider-Man and the National Guard troops clown for Homestead residents during "Operation: Marvel Aid." (Above) Spidey gets a grateful hug from a Florida fan. (Left) The custom-designed artwork for the "Marvel Aid" benefit T-shirt. (Below) The web-slinger signs autographs even as volunteers unload the thousands of Marvel Comics sent for the victims of Hurricane Andrew.

Photographs by Gary Guzzo.



At the same time, residents enjoyed the tailgate party featuring a reggae band, barbecue, carnival games and performances by the Miami Dolphins' and Hurricanes' Cheerleaders. As the big Miami-Buffalo game began, tent city residents sat down in front of television sets brought in by WIOD, while volunteers off-loaded many cases of Marvel Comics into police and Marine vehicles for distribution to more remote areas and other tent cities. This done, the Marvel Aid team set off for The Salvation Army Distribution Center.

The final operation of the day was to supply the Salvation Army with the hundreds of remaining cases of Marvel comics for distribution to children still living in the remains of their homes. The center is a mass collection and distribution location for relief supplies brought in from throughout the nation, aiding about 3,000 people a day. Salvation Army officials and volunteers helped unload the remainder of the comics and expressed gratitude for this particular shipment. It seemed that the center had run out of items for children a week earlier and couldn't wait to start handing some out.

At the end of the long day, the volunteers and Marvel personnel said their good-byes and headed back to their stores and families, tired but proud that they were able to bring some joy to an area hit with such hardship.

— Gary Guzzo

Hot Sheet

Brrrr. . . It is cold outside! Let's face it, the dog days of summer are long past, the leaves won't be green for another few months, and unless you're into shivering a lot, it's better just to stay inside and curl up with whatever makes you warm. And the second best thing to snuggle up with is a stack of comics, especially the hot numbers coming out this January.

A LITTLE HELP FROM YOUR FRIENDS

When times are tough and a hero just can't best evil single-handedly, it shows good sense to call in some extra firepower. Well, after his tragic de-powering in **DOCTOR STRANGE #49-50**, the Master of the Mystic Arts comes to the realization that there is a lot of evil out there that is best combatted by a group of heroes. However, not every situation is the same, so Dr. Strange decides to form a sort of "non-team" — **THE SECRET DEFENDERS**, an ever changing collection of heroes banding together to face whatever challenge arises, from drug dealers to interdimensional bandits. Written by scribe Roy Thomas (who wrote for the original **DEFENDERS** series) and edited by **DOCTOR STRANGE** Editor Mike Rockwitz, this new series promises continuous change as each story arc features a new gathering under Strange's mystical eye, of the Marvel heroes appropriate to deal with the threat. **THE SECRET DEFENDERS** concept has a good many people excited. "At last, the return of my favorite '70's comic series!" offers Steve Snyder of Ohio-based *Central City Comics*. "**THE DEFENDERS** original concept was a 'non-team' whose members changed as the need arose, and with the new **SECRET DEFENDERS**, Roy Thomas, [newcomer penciler] Andre Coates and inker Don [NICK FURY] Hudson bring the concept back. Dr. Strange is the perfect focal point. His mystic roots allow him to travel to the sight of any problem and his Marvel Universe roots tie him to any hero he may ever need." Marvel Editor Evan Skolnick also awaits **THE SECRET DEFENDERS** with anticipation. "This is a great idea," Evan stated enthusiastically. "You'll never see the same thing twice and you never know what you might see next!" Finally, Glen Friedman and the folks at New York comic chain *Jim Hanley's Universe* reminded us that this series takes the best of what makes the Marvel Universe cohesive ever since the Fantastic Four first met Namor: the fact that any other character can appear in any book at any time because everyone lives in the same world. "**THE SECRET DEFENDERS** looks like a hit!! The comic should heighten Doctor Strange's already rising popularity. The momentum he has built up with the **INFINITY WAR** crossovers will increase to near light-speed velocity with this new series. Guest stars and crossovers are always popular. Just remember how popular the New Fantastic Four (FF issues #347-#349) were!" Well, starting in January, **THE SECRET DEFENDERS** will be like that every month.

WEBS, SPELLS, AND THE SEVEN HELLS

Doctor Strange also teams up with another Marvel hero in the 64-page Bookshelf Special **SPIDER-MAN & DOCTOR STRANGE: THE WAY TO DUSTY DEATH**. Co-plotted by writers Roy Thomas and Gerry Conway, scripted by Thomas, drawn by artist Michael Bair and edited by Rob Tokar it begins on the anniversary of the most significant night in Spider-Man's life: the death of Peter Parker's Uncle Ben. The two heroes become embroiled in a battle for a beautiful woman's life and for Peter Parker's spirit and Steve Snyder reminds us, it's a story whose subject matter should not surprise us even if its conclusion might. "This book gives us a look into a seldom seen side of your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man. Many readers forget that Peter Parker has seen two of the most important people in his life die due to



his actions (or lack thereof). It's interesting to see this side of Peter, and Roy Thomas and Gerry Conway handle it very well. And Michael Bair's art finds just the right mood for this mystic story of redemption."

Other people agree that artist Michael Bair's work on the book gives **DUSTY DEATH** an added punch. "It's some of the best art I've seen this year," stated regular Spidey Assistant Editor Mike Lackey. "Bair produces some incredible line work and shows wonderful composition." Buddy Saunders of the Texas comic retail chain *Lone Star Comics* added to the praise, saying, "The Spider-Man & Doctor Strange book looks spectacular, with an interesting story by Thomas and Con-

way and stunning art by Michael Bair, an extremely underrated artist." Marvel Editor Fabian (**TEKWORLD**) Nicleza, however, feels that everyone else is pointing out what he's known all along. "With **DUSTY DEATH**, Bair shows just why I enjoyed working with him on **ALPHA FLIGHT** and why I hired him to draw the new **HELLSTORM** series. **DUSTY DEATH** has some of the richest, most detailed renditions of these characters we've seen in a long time."

NO TIME FOR SURFING

Death and redemption also touch the lives of Marvel's most cosmic characters, Silver Surfer and Warlock, in the four issue limited series **RESURRECTION**. This bitter-sweet tale, written and drawn by Jim Starlin with links by Terry Austin (beginning with #2 after Starlin links himself on the first issue), follows the Surfer on his most important quest yet: the attempt to bring his beloved Shalla Bal back to life. It is a story which promises to touch its readers. "Unrequited love has been a mainstay of literature," points out Steve Gursky of the Pennsylvania/New Jersey *Steve's Comic Relief*. "It was one of the key ingredients in the original Lee & Buscema **SILVER SURFER** series. And now, neither the Silver Surfer nor Jim Starlin seems to feel that death is insurmountable in attaining love. The Surfer teams with another resurrected character, Warlock, to reclaim the life of Shalla Bal, Norrin Radd's one true love. As interesting as the story writer Jim Starlin has crafted, it is the pictures crafted by artist Jim Starlin that makes this a must have comic."

There are others who also feel for the Surfer and await his chance at happiness. **GHOST RIDER** Assistant Editor Matt Morra, for example, sees **RESURRECTION** as a significant event in Norrin Radd's history. "I'm a Starlin fan and I like the idea of [striving to] bring back Shalla Bal. Silver Surfer deserves some happiness." Nebraska retailer Brian Schur of *Cosmic Comics* eagerly awaits **SILVER SURFER & WARLOCK: RESURRECTION** as well. "Marvel's most cosmic heroes on a quest as written and drawn by Jim Starlin — WOW!! I am a long-time Starlin fan, and the chance to see him write and draw Warlock and the Silver Surfer gets me excited!" And the search for lost, surely unattainable love is a worthy quest to follow.

WIDOW BITES AND FULL METAL JACKETS

January offers yet another team-up with the Punisher & Black Widow graphic novel, **SPINNING DOOMSDAY'S WEB**. This spine-tingling tale of international intrigue and the lust for power is written by Dan (**NIGHTSTALKERS**) Chichester, penciled by Larry (**X-FACTOR**) Stroman, inked by Mark (**EXCALIBUR**) Farmer, and edited by Nel (**IRON MAN**) Yomtov. Early word has it that a book by such a stellar creative team can be nothing short of hot. "Larry Stroman's art is beautiful," Steve Snyder pointed out. "It's artistic, stylistic. Dan Chichester's story looks to be another winner. Dan shines the brightest when he is writing espionage stories and the Black Widow is a great espionage character. The team of the Punisher and Natasha should prove for some interesting character interaction. This one will be a major winner."

Fabian Nicleza flipped through some of **SPINNING'S** pages and couldn't wait to get the prize inside. "I would read the back of a cereal box if it had Black Widow on it. Having Chichester and Stroman doing the book means the cereal inside the box won't ever get soggy!" Buddy Saunders and the staff of *Lone Star*'s eagerly await this project as well. "We're also impressed with the Punisher/Black Widow graphic novel. Stroman's art is as strong as ever."



January will see the release of another installment in Marvel's look at the future, **PUNISHER 2099**. This guns blazing action series will feature the man who adopts Frank Castle's bloody legacy, police officer Jake Galloway. "The Punisher of our time is hard-hitting, but **PUNISHER 2099** hits even harder," Evan Skolnick pointed out. "Its gritty, futuristic action is the perfect blend of science-fiction and tough-guy vigilante flicks. Two guns up!"

Gary Colabuono of Chicago's *Moondog's Comics* also believes that **PUNISHER 2099** is not a hero to be taken lightly. "Fans of the lead-spittin', skull crunching Frank Castle won't be disappointed with the new adventures of the deathware-dealin' 21st Century vigilante with the bone crushing power-bat. He's an interesting addition to the **PUNISHER** mythos." Matt Morra agrees wholeheartedly. "I read **PUNISHER 2099** and was amazed at how good it was," Morra stated. "Everything works; the story, the art. . . It was a very good read. I think it'll be my new favorite book."

A LAUGH FROM THE PAST

While everyone is looking forward to new series, special team-ups, and 2099, Editor Evan Skolnick thinks that the year just past is a great place to visit one last time. A word of warning though, if you plan to reminisce while reading **MARVEL YEAR-IN-REVIEW '92**, wrap your ribs tightly. "MYIR '92 promises to be the strongest version of this book yet and the flat-out funniest," Fabian Nicieza spewed between laughs. "This book is full of biting wit and sarcasm for super hero fans who like to laugh." And laugh they will, as MYIR takes pot shots at the Punisher, the death of Tony Stark, and Ant-Man, to name but a few of the victims in a barrage of vicious gags and off-color articles. "This year's **REVIEW** features savage satire of the Marvel Universe," Gary Colabuono observed with amusement. "The chuckles contained in the 'before & after' drawings of the artistic evolution of Wolverine alone are worth the price of the book."

DEMONS WITHIN AND WITHOUT

Finally, and on a much more serious note, January will see the release of **THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS**, a modern retelling of John Bunyan's classic tale of after-life and rebirth. Adapted and transformed by writer Martin Powell along with artists Seppo Makinen and Bob Downs, **PILGRIM'S PROGRESS** may become a modern classic as well. "The creative team takes the mythological and literary elements from the 17th Century manuscript and puts a modern spin on it," Colabuono pointed out. "It's a fascinating experiment. Marvel should be applauded for giving odd, heartfelt projects like this a chance to be read."

So what is everyone waiting for? Pull up the covers and read!

THE PUNISHER OF OUR TIME IS HARD HITTING,

BUT...



- Jerry A. Novick

FRED HEMBECK presents
CHRISTMAS
 in LATVERIA

~and what
 can SANTA
 do for
YOU,
 child?..



ON DECEMBER 24th OF
 EACH YEAR, THE ABSOL-
 UTE MONARCH OF THIS TINY
 BALKAN KINGDOM ASSUMES
 THE GUISE OF OLD ST. NICK
 AND MEETS WITH HIS
 YOUNGEST SUBJECTS...



This year
 my wish is
 to have my
 LIFE'S course
 GUIDED along
 by our WISE
 and GENEROUS
DIALER!!

DONE, son!
 ~phew!~
 And what
 about YOU, my
 dear? What do
 YOU desire?..

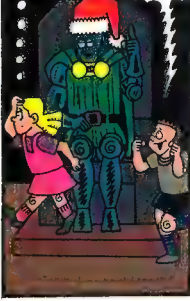


It is MY hope that our BE-
 LOVED KING continues to
 benefit the citizens of Latver-
 ia with his GENIUS by
 making
 our MANY
CHOICES
FOR
US!!



You can COUNT ON
 IT, little one!

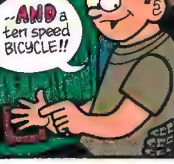
~phew!~
 OBOY!
 MY TURN!
 MY TURN!



What do
 YOU want
 from SANTA?

Well, I'd
 like a NIN-
 TENDO GAME
 BOY, a MULTI-
 DECK CD
 player--

--AND a
 ten speed
BICYCLE!!

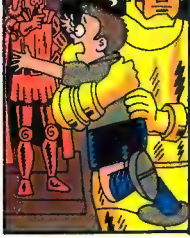


GUARDS!
GUARDS!



TAKE HIM AWAY!!

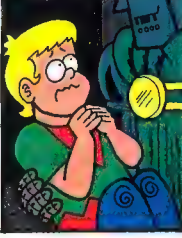
In the
 CD player
 doesn't
 HAVE to be
 multi-
 deck?..



Next.



And
 what is
YOUR
 WISH for
 Decem-
 ber
 25th?



To start
 with, I'd
 like to
 STILL be
 BREATH-
 ING when
 December
26th
 rolls
 around...



DOOM bless us, everyone,
 and to all, a GOOD NIGHT!



— Marc McLaurin



AKIRA TODAY, GONE TOMORROW, or Why AKIRA drove Marie Javins



One of the greatest controversies of the 1992 publishing year has been the notable absence of the final climactic chapters in the saga of **AKIRA**. This Japanese epic, originally planned to encompass 37 books, mysteriously disappeared after issue #33.

"After the last volume was published in Japan," Epic Comics Editor Marie Javins said, "Katsuhiro Otomo looked at his creation, and thought the ending wasn't all that it could be. At that point, he started re-writing and re-drawing the ending, adding 30 all-new pages that have not yet seen print, even in the Japanese editions." The delay in the regular publishing schedule is a result of these additions, which are scheduled to see print on a new monthly schedule beginning in January of 1993.

Does this addition mean a different ending for the American edition? While the book will obviously be very different from its previously published black and white Japanese counterpart, beyond that, Marie isn't telling. "It's in Mr. Otomo's hands. He's not letting it go, until it's perfect."

AKIRA: MADE IN THE USA

Though the coming year will see the end of the **AKIRA** saga, it will also introduce a history-making new chapter in the saga of Akira, which has been dubbed the Akira Tribute Issue, and is scheduled for issue #38.

Already committed to producing new short stories and pinups as a final tribute to the Japanese masterpiece are such superstars as Ann (**DAREDEVIL**) Nocenti, Mike (**DARKHAWK**) Manley, Jo (**AKIRA**) DUFFY, Mark (**GHOST RIDER**, **WOLVERINE**) Texeira, Kent (**HAVOK**/**WOLVERINE**: **MELTDOWN**) Williams, and Ted (**MET-ROPOl**) McKeever. Joining their ranks in this 64-page milestone are talents such as Kevin (**MARSHAL LAW**) O'Neill, John (**PUNISHER**, **CABLE**) Romita, Jr., Joe (**X-FACTOR**) Quesada, and Jean (**MOEBIUS**) Giraud. Not necessarily in that order. Miss this one, and it'll hurt.



I've never written a comic book company before. It's usually not my style. I wrote this in hopes of getting an answer to this question:

Where is **AKIRA**?

Greg Buffington
Duncanville, TX

Excellent question, Greg. Hopefully, it's on the back issue rack between Alpha Flight and Avengers. Thanks for writing.

Your **AKIRA** comic book has not arrived at comic stores in my area for some months now (as of #33). I am wondering what the situation is. If the comic has been canceled or finished, could you let us know?

Erik Brewster
San Jose CA

Yup. We'll let you know. Absolutely. Thanks for writing.

One of the comics I collect is **AKIRA**. I have collected it from its first American issue, and have every one up to #33. This series was supposed to continue up through #37. Why were the last four issues not published?

Jeffrey A. Budke
Spokane, WA

Okay, you got us. Read on, McBudke, and all shall be answered. . .

over the edge.

COMIC INSPIRATION

Saints, demons, prophets, devils and a special kind of Marvel super hero — all inhabit Marvel's new series of "inspirational comic books."

Working in conjunction with religious book publisher Thomas Nelson Inc., now the largest religious book house in the United States, this new series of titles will include a three-part series on the life of Christ: **THE BIRTH OF CHRIST**, **MIRACLES AND DEATH AND RESURRECTION**; adaptations of **THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS** and **THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS**; and will introduce a new super hero to the Marvel Universe — **ILLUMINATOR**.

These books will be available in trade paperback form through Christian book stores, regular trade book stores, and local comic book shops. They may be considered "inspirational comics" by their editors, writers, and artists, but as Mort Todd, editor of **THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS** said, "they're not just for Christians."



Marvel Vice President Mike Hobson remarked that one of the main goals of this project, whose idea originated with the late Carol Kalish, is to expand the market for comic books. "By offering different kinds of comics through new outlets, in this case Christian book stores, we'll be able to reach people who wouldn't ordinarily pick up a comic book," he noted.

"**THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS** is set in the present day," Hobson said, "and **THE LIFE OF CHRIST** is... the life of Christ. I don't think they'll be changing what's in the Bible."

Though the stories are traditional Bible tales, they do include "a little twist," Editor Glenn Herdling explained. "Writer Louise Simonson and I decided it would be a good idea to do it from the point of view of children" said Herdling. "For example *The Wise Men* have a child with them and everything that they do is told from the child's perspective and we are going to continue that throughout the three issues."

The first installment, **THE BIRTH OF CHRIST**, is available now, just in time for Christmas. The second, **MIRACLES**, will be about the Easter story and will be available around the time of that holiday. Summertime will see the final chapter, **DEATH AND RESURRECTION**. Once completed, the three will be collected and published as a single edition; **THE LIFE OF CHRIST**. The illustrators for the trilogy are Mary Wilshire and Bill Anderson.

"I think we've all been 'divinely inspired' " Herdling remarked. "Everyone has totally gotten into this project, and it's really been fantastic."

The second adaptation, also now available, is **THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS** "We went to Thomas Nelson and asked them if we could adapt the book and make it a modern tale. They loved the idea, and we did," Editor Hildy Mesnik said. The updated version of the classic John Bunyan tale is being adapted as a "spiritual allegory" by writer Martin Powell, whose previous works include *Dracula* for Malibu comics. A 96-page trade paperback, this is the story of a hero named Christian, who must battle against evil forces on his journey to salvation. With artwork by Seppo Makinen and inking by Bob Downs, **THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS** is truly a journey through the trials of life and death.

Perhaps the most off-beat of the Christian tales is the adaptation of C.S. Lewis' **THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS**. Editor Mort Todd explained, "It's very funny. It's not preachy at all — it's about a devil's advocate." Also in trade paperback form and available this spring, **THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS** is "not going to be a traditional comic book" according to Todd. Rather, it will be done entirely as special two-page spreads by writer/layout artist Charles E. Hall (*Monsters Attack* and *Cracked*).

The story, a series of letters written by the demon Screwtape to his nephew Wormwood is "full of anecdotes." Though it's a classically Christian tale, Todd is quick to point out that, "we've got a lot of Marvel-style demons running around."

And, beginning this month, Marvel introduces an all-

new super hero to it's Universe; **ILLUMINATOR**, whose adventures will appear in a bi-monthly bookshelf series. **ILLUMINATOR** will offer a "super hero in the basic Marvel tradition," writer Glenn Herdling said. Bequeathed powers by a mysterious light, teenager Andy Prentiss finds himself battling against both human and supernatural foes. Unsure of himself and his new found abilities, he seeks guidance and receives it from an elderly church janitor named Gus.

"Gus is really the guy who is high on religion," Herdling said. "Illuminator is directed by him to fight the forces of evil with Christian fundamentals. But, really, he's not completely into the whole thing, yet."

"He doesn't know where his powers come from," Herdling added. "We're implying that they are divine powers, but he may never find out where they came from. We're going to leave that interpretation up to the reader. We don't want to get heavy handed. There is a message and inspiration here, but this is still a comic book. It's entertainment."

Illuminator, whose abilities include, "the light of truth" (which forces opponents to reveal the truth) and

the power to cause "severe pain in true evil," obtains different powers in any given situation. "The powers become available as he needs them. He doesn't always have them, and he's never sure he'll get them."

"He's not the Punisher," Herdling said, laughing. "He does act according to Christian values, so he won't go around killing people, but anything that is pure evil [a real demon] is going to be in a lot of pain."

Drawn by artist Craig Brasfield, who's "really done a great job" according to Editor Chris Cooper, Illuminator will be a new force in the Universe. So will there be an Illuminator/Spider-Man team-up in the near future? "We would like to establish Illuminator on his own, before we consider doing a crossover," Cooper said.

A departure from super hero-fare, these new titles give Marvel the opportunity to expand the market for comics and establish relationships with a different kind of comic book fan. Summing the project up, Mike Hobson said, "These are definitely the kinds of books parents will want to pick up for their children. And anything that enhances the image of comics and reaches new readers can only help the industry."



MARVEL'S BEST VIDEOS

Marvel Super Heroes seem to be leaping out everywhere, and *Best Film and Video* is making sure they leap into VCRs and onto TV screens. After a successful launch of their Marvel Videos last year, Best is releasing even more of Marvel's hottest heroes for the Christmas season and beyond!

In early 1991, *Best Film and Video* was looking to expand its children's and family line. Executive Vice President Ben Tenn had been with Disney Home Video for years before coming to the ten-year-old Best, and he and President Roy Winnick saw a need that the Marvel animated library could fill. "We wanted quality series which had a high recognition factor from the audience," said Tenn. "Plus, we wanted something fun!" On a recommendation from Stan Lee, Best began negotiations with New World Entertainment, which owned rights to almost all of Marvel's animated series. After months of negotiations, Best and Marvel agreed to a four-year contract for material from Marvel's 25 years of animated history.

On their way to debut, Best hooked up again with Stan Lee. Stan traveled to Las Vegas for a video promotion conference, where he helped launch the line. Stan's favorite videos? "Well, it's a tough pick, but I'd have to say the *Incredible Hulk* cartoons were the best, especially given the wonderful narration," Stan said, laughing.

With pre-publicity high, eight 30-minute cassettes debuted in August 1991, while five more followed in

October. Each cassette offered one or two episodes of every show in the Marvel/New World library. While some were very successful—*Spider-Man*, *Fantastic Four*, *Captain America*, *Incredible Hulk*—others did not fare as well, including *Thor*, *Spider-Woman*, *Dungeons & Dragons*, and *Little Wizards*. They performed less than anticipated, and plans for future volumes of these series were put on hold.

Meanwhile, a few glitches got into the system. Due to communication errors, the Human Torch was put on the front of the *Fantastic Four* box (though the adventure featured Herbie the robot), and Wolverine was pictured on a *Sub-Mariner* box which guest-starred the original 1960's X-Men.

To add to the problem some of the tapes that were supposed to have two adventures only had one. Best recalled these and offered fans replacements. "We're only human," Tenn said of the glitches, "and it won't happen again. If a fan got one of these tapes, they not only have our sincere apologies, but they can return the tape to us and we'll send them a replacement tape!"

In March of 1992, Best released another six tapes in the increasingly popular line, before delivering a sales punch to the video stores with their release of the original X-Men pilot, "Pryde of the X-Men," in August. On the mutant heels of the X-Men toy line and continuing comic book success, the 30-minute pilot quickly became Best's top seller. Fans who bought it also received a brochure detailing all the other Marvel videos and two \$2.50 coupons towards further Marvel video purchases!

For the end of 1992, six more Marvel tapes have been released, plus a special "Collector's Gift-Pack Sleeve." The sleeve, specially prepared for the Marvel line, can hold three videos. "The stores get to pick which videos they want to include in the pack," said Tenn, "which means that all the collections could be different. The sleeve, however, is the same."

The Marvel collection will continue to grow next March with at least six more super hero tapes. Tenn also promises at least two new *Robocop* tapes if Orion releases *Robocop 3* in February, but Best is being careful about not releasing too many titles too soon, so as not to glut the market and bankrupt their fans.

Best is discussing special collector's sets of the 1960's *Spider-Man* (by Ralph Bakshi) and *Hulk* series, which may or may not be targeted to the direct comic market first. Hour-length volumes may also be on the way in the future.

Marvel videos are available at many comic stores and at large chains such as *Toys 'R' Us*, *Blockbuster Video* and *MusicLand*. Two different



THIS PAGE AND NEXT, the covers for three of the most popular tapes in the Best *Marvel Video* collection, including the original pilot for an *X-Men* series developed by Marvel Productions

versions of each volume exist. The \$14.99 volumes are taped at standard play (SP) speed and are generally available at the comic stores or smaller video outlets. The \$9.99 volumes are taped at extended play (EP) speed and are generally available at larger chain stores. Tenn noted that, although there is a very slight drop in quality from SP to EP, that "the EP tapes are taped from a higher quality master print, meaning the difference is almost nonexistent."

Stan Lee is happy with Best's videos. "It's wonderful to have our videos on sale now, and forevermore! It makes the work immortal!"

Stan is happy that the videos will thrill younger fans too. "It gives people who've missed the early cartoons a chance to see what the excitement was all about! It's a never ending triumph!"

Fans can look forward to many Marvel videos to come. "In a year-and-a-half, we've put out less than one-fourth of all the shows available in the Marvel library, and we've exceeded our four-year goal," Tenn

Fans can look forward to many Marvel videos to come. "In a year-and-a-half, we've put out less than one-fourth of all the shows available in the Marvel library, and we've exceeded our four-year goal," Tenn said, adding that, by the end of 1992, over 1 million Marvel videos will have been sold. "The interest in Marvel super heroes is growing at a geometric rate, with licensing and cross-promotion. The future looks great for Marvel, and for us!"



Best Film and Video's Marvel Super Heroes released to date:

Spider-Man

Dr. Doom, Master of the World
Curiosity Killed the Spider-Man
Revenge of the Green Goblin

Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends

The Origin of the Spider-Friends
A Firestar Is Born
Spidey Goes Hollywood

Incredible Hulk

Bruce Banner Un-Masked!
The Incredible Shrinking Hulk
The Origin of the Hulk

X-Men: Pryde of the X-Men #1

Spider-Woman: Spider-Woman and the Fly

Captain America

The Origin of Captain America
Midnight in Greymour Castle
Revenge of Captain America &
The Sentinel and the Spy
Return of Captain America &
Zemo and the Masters of Evil

Fantastic Four

The Menace of Magneto
Meet Dr. Doom
The Olympics of Space

Sub-Mariner

Atlantis Under Attack &
Dr. Doom's Day
The Planet of Doom &
The Start of The Quest

Iron Man

If I Die, Let it Be With Honor &
The Crimson Dynamo
The Other Iron Man &
Cliff of Doom

The Mighty Thor: Enter Hercules & The Tomorrow Man
Robocop: The Man in the Iron Suit

Dungeons & Dragons: In Search of the Dungeon Master

Dino-Riders: The Adventure Begins

White Wizards: The Singing Sword



THE NEW



"...I don't write G.I. JOE any differently from the way I write WOLVERINE."

In the coming months, G.I. JOE is going through some drastic changes. "Be prepared, because this is not the same old story," said Editor David Wohl. "We're allowing the book to become more gritty — more real."

Ten years after its debut, G.I. JOE is still going great guns. It has been considered innovative from the start, largely due to the book's constant tendency to grow and adapt. When asked why, David answered, "The toy company wants us to be our own book. They know Marvel knows story telling, and so they trust us."

Both Hasbro and Marvel are determined to make this a top of the line

comic book. "This is a real exciting time for G.I. JOE," Editor Wohl said. "Many things are planned." To start, Hasbro has already begun a major ad campaign spotlighting both the toys and the comics; with T.V. commercials to air. The comic book will undergo a face lift, resulting in a brand new logo, and many core changes are afoot.

"We want this book to become the definitive contemporary military comic," David said. However, this is not to say that current readers are being abandoned. Far from it. This new approach is more an expansion of the current title, and familiar char-

acters will continue to be highlighted. Specifically, this revamping is enabling the book to realize more of its potential, to create the most realistic story-lines possible.

"On the average, we're going to have three to four part story arcs," Editor Wohl said. These story arcs will roughly coincide with each new line of toys launched by Hasbro. But the toys will not directly affect the comic, David was careful to point out. "While they reflect each other, they are different sides of the same coin."

Writer Larry Hama, who is also currently working on WOLVERINE and the forthcoming SABRETOOTH

JOE'S

THOSE GREAT AMERICAN

HEROES



mini-series, also pointed out that this is not a case of a toy company demanding the book be a certain way. "We're the final word on what happens within the book. Hasbro has been extremely open about it."

When asked about the new gritty nature of the series, Larry replied, "I don't write this as a kiddie book. I don't write G.I. JOE any differently from the way I write WOLVERINE."

The first full blown story arc of this new approach will begin next month in issue #135 (also the first issue to sport the new logo). In this issue, a new subdivision of the Joes is introduced: NINJA FORCE, a martial arts

fighting team under the leadership of Snake Eyes.

In June, the next phase will kick into gear as ARMOR TECH, the high tech subdivision of the Joes, makes its debut. In a four part story arc, readers will be treated to the dramatic return of the TRANSFORMERS. This contemporary version of the TRANSFORMERS will depict them "like they've never been seen before," Wohl said. "This is going to be the TRANSFORMERS in a dynamic story line with realistic settings." If all goes as planned, David continued, this will give the TRANSFORMERS a chance to grow into their own new

series, which would support the new Transformers toy line, which Hasbro has already begun to release.

As for the G.I. JOE book, the long term plan is to gradually phase in further subdivisions. However, exactly what these teams will be and when they will debut is still in development. Nonetheless, what is certain is that '93 will be a rejuvenating time for the G.I. JOE comic book. A time of change. A time to watch.

- Jonathan Garriss

SPEAK MARVELITES!

LETTERS

Send your letters to: **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**, c/o Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York NY 10016.

Attention correspondents: All letters to be considered for publication must include your complete name and address, though we will gladly withhold that info on request!

This month's snappy letter column title comes to us from Fred Crow of Cedar Bluff, AL. So thanks a lot, Fred! And remember that we still need a brand new title for this column every month. So if you've got any ideas, then don't dawdle — send 'em on in! If we use one of them, we'll even thank you right here in black and white.

When we opened this month's sack of mail, we found a whole bunch of thoughtful, well-written letters on the same timely subject. As a result, we decided to run **two LETTERS OF THE MONTH!**

Dear Marvel,

I enjoy your comics very much. I can't buy just one, it has to be multiples.

The other day, I picked up a Wizard mag and found that X-Men cartoons are coming to the Fox network. That totally excites me! Comics fans like myself (young and old) have been waiting for this for a long time.

I hope it will be up to everyone's expectations. Hopefully, it will open the way for other series, such as **X-FORCE**, **THE PUNISHER**, and **GHOST RIDER**. Maybe you could bring back **THE HULK** and **SPIDER-MAN**.

Please consider my comments and suggestions. In the past, your cartoons have been more cartoonish than real. Don't get me wrong; I watched every **HULK** and **SPIDER-MAN** cartoon you put out. But I think you should put more drama and realism in your 'toons. I observed that, in your last **X-MEN** cartoon, the characters lacked depth. They should act like they do in your books. Putting more drama in with the action will make the 'toons a lot better, like *Robotech*. Don't pull a **G.I. JOE** on us, where good guys fire and bad guys fire but nobody gets hurt.

That's ridiculous!

I also have some other suggestions for any other 'toons you might put out. Take stories out of the books, like the **X-Tinction Agenda**, the **Brood**, **Venom**, the **Sinister Six**, the **Mutant Massacre**, **Lady Mandarin**, **Spidey** and the **Punisher**, the **Genoshans**; the **Hand**, the **Lizard**, **Hobgoblin**, the new **X-Men** versus **Magneto**, etc., etc.

We would eat it up if it were on videocassette! I know my friends and I would!

Till you turn the X-Babies into a 'toon, Make Mine Marvel!

Eric Ali
6741 E. Nicaragua Drive
Tucson, AZ 85730

Dear Marvel,

I've been hearing a lot about the **SPIDER-MAN** movie, and there's no



THE MICHELANGELO
COMPUTER VIRUS INFECTS
IRON MAN'S ON-BOARD SYSTEM...

way I want it to turn out like **THE PUNISHER** and **CAPTAIN AMERICA** movies. Here's my ideas for an awesome movie.

Green Goblin: arch enemy, and show origin. Have the Goblin kill Gwen Stacy, which leads to a great fight scene in which the Goblin dies. Peter comes home broken-hearted and Mary Jane comforts him and tells him she knows he's Spider-Man. He tells her his origin, which leads to a flashback and shows it. Peter doesn't know if he should become Spider-Man again since Gwen died because of it. Harry Osborn becomes the Goblin, and Peter realizes that if he doesn't become Spidey, more people will die. Spidey turns him in. Also, this movie deals with the conflict between Spidey and J. Jonah Jameson.

Cast:

Spider-Man/ Peter Parker: Tom Cruise

Mary Jane: Cindy Crawford

Gwen Stacy: Brooke Shields

Norman Osborn/Green Goblin:

Roddy Piper

Harry Osborn/Green Goblin: Christian Slater

Also, please make Spidey's costume from the same material as in the Flash TV show and not the material from Spidey's old show. It would look way cooler.

Noel Tovar
1420 Fieldstone Ct. E.
Bedford, TX 76022

Well you guys, you're not the only ones who're excited about all of the upcoming Marvel-inspired television and film projects. And, Eric, you'll probably be glad to know that the X-MEN animated series will, indeed, pull a lot of situations and stories from the comics, including the mutant-enslaving island of Genosha, the Juggernaut and Sabretooth. In fact, even the X-team itself has been altered a bit from the pilot in order to better fit current X-MEN continuity; the current team includes the likes of Gambit and Jubilee alongside old favorites such as Wolverine and Cyclops.

As far as plots and casting for these various projects go, well, that's up to their producers not us. But it's still fun to come up with dream casts, even if it doesn't impact on the finished products. Your casting ideas sound pretty neat, but Roddy Piper as Norman Osborn?

And now, here is a different take on trying to assign names to our cast of characters:

To whom it may concern:

After having read the article on "The X-cutters' Song" in issue #116 of **MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE**, we have come to the conclusion that the mystery surrounding Cable is hardly a mystery.

Fact #1: The article in question links Cable with Cyclops, Marvel Girl, Havok, and Apocalypse in a revenge scenario on the moon.

Fact #2: All that was previously

known about Cable is that he came from the future and his first name was Nathan.

Fact #3: The only previous scenario involving the moon, Cyclops, Marvel Girl, and Apocalypse was in issue #68 of X-FACTOR.

These three facts, taken as a whole lead us to conclude that Cable's full name is *Nathan Christopher Charles Summers*. The proof of this logic can be seen by comparing the damage done to Cyclops's infant son by Apocalypse with Cable's facial scars and bionics. As you will note, the scars around Cable's eye clearly match the infection around young Nathan's eye in X-FACTOR #68.

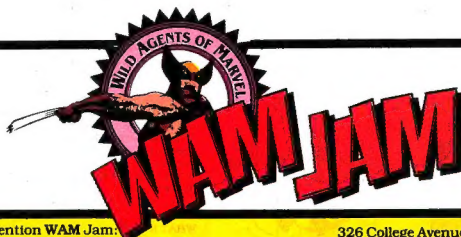
Also, young Nathan's time trip to the future coincides with Cable's history in the future. Provided that we have made not errors in our logic, this conclusion is inescapably the truth. As the immortal Sherlock Holmes would say, "It's elementary my dear Marvelites."

Todd & Cindy Warriner
147 Sunridge Drive
Springfield, MA 01118

Hmm... Not bad, Todd and Cindy. But you don't really expect us to give away a story this big in a letter column, do you? Sorry, but you're not getting any hints from us.

While you're waiting for your answers, though, you're sure to run into some more of our favorite Wild Agents of Marvel in our monthly...

That's right — it's time, once again, to don our trenchcoats and check out the coded messages that have been sent to us in hollowed-out bars of soap and mysterious broken lockets. If you want to be a WAMmer Jammmer yourself, simply include your WAM ID number or write to us on official WAM stationery.



Attention WAM Jam:
I was recently reading a letter in a magazine from an unpublished artist with a legitimate complaint about editors and the quick way they review artwork at conventions. Although I understand that editors are pressed for time, it still isn't fair. I think it would be a good idea to release the **MARVEL TRY-OUT BOOK** again and, each month, pick one or two of the best entries for writing, penciling, inking etc., and print it as a comic book to get the public's reaction. What do you think?

I hope you will answer my question. Thank you for listening. This is WAM Agent 07682 signing out.

Daniel Panzella

326 College Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10314

Well Daniel, we agree that it would be nice if editors were able to spend more time with every prospective artist at a comics convention, but the problem is really one of time. There are an awful lot of people who want to have their art critiqued at a convention, and that means that the editors who attend have a choice: They can see everyone work briefly, or they can spend more time with just a few artists, in which case the rest of the attendees would have to go home disappointed, their work unseen. So while we don't think the current practice is

perfect, we do think that a little feedback is better than sending a large crowd of people away with none at all.

And you're in luck, because the **OFFICIAL MARVEL COMICS TRY-OUT BOOK** is due out again in time for Christmas. And if you want to submit your work to Marvel, send it to "Submissions Editor, c/o Marvel Comics Group" right here at 387 Park Avenue South. Just make sure to send a couple of pages worth of continuity (not just pinups), and please be patient, because Marvel gets a huge number of submissions every day. It does take awhile to give them the attention they deserve.

checklist



FIRST WEEK

AVENGERS WEST COAST #92	1.75
CAGE #12	1.25
CAPTAIN AMERICA #413	1.25
DAREDEVIL #314	1.25
Matt & Karen's relationship is explored.	
DARKHAWK #25	2.95
ILLUMINATOR #2	4.99
MARVEL AGE PREVIEW 1993	3.95
MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #123	1.50
Wolverine/Lynx, She-Hulk, Master Man, Ghost Rider/Typhoid Mary	
NAMOR #36	1.25
Namor's Strike Force attacks civil war-torn Atlantis.	
NIGHTSTALKERS #5	1.75
The Stalkers battle a Satanic cult.	
NOMAD #11	1.75
Nomad dons a dress to track a crazed serial killer.	
ORIGINAL GHOST RIDER #9	1.75
Witch Woman takes GR on a guided tour of hell.	
PUNISHER GN: GHOSTS OF INNOCENTS #1 (of 2)	5.95
REN & STIMPY 4	1.75
A ranting Ren becomes addicted to caffeine.	
SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #207	2.25
Conan is hired to rescue the King's kidnapped wife.	
SHE-HULK #49	1.75
The conclusion of the outer space saga.	
SPIDER-MAN 2099 #5	1.25
TERROR INC. #9	1.75
Terror is accused of committing grisly murders.	
UNCANNY X-MEN #298	1.25
WCW WRESTLING #12	1.25
Big Ron Simmons helps Sting defend his title.	
WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #98	1.25
The Bloodrose threatens Richard Fisk's empire.	

SECOND WEEK

ALPHA FLIGHT #118	1.75
Introducing a Canadian Mutant Registration Act.	
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #375	3.95
BARBIE #27	1.25
CONAN SAGA #72	2.25
DARKHOLD #6	1.75
DEATH'S HEAD II #4	1.75
DH battles a villain who threatens the universe.	
GHOST RIDER #35	1.75
GROO THE WANDERER #99	2.25
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #34	1.25
The Guardians get a new member — Yellowjacket.	
KNIGHTS OF PENDRAGON II #9	1.75
The Knights battle the Red Lord's army.	
MARVEL MILESTONES: TALES OF SUSPENSE #39	2.95
PUNISHER WAR ZONE #13	1.75
A brainwashed Frank is surrounded by killers.	
QUASAR #44	1.25
RAVAGE 2099 #4	1.25
Ravage is stranded on Hellrock with no way out.	
SECRET DEFENDERS #1	2.50
SHADOW RIDERS #2 (of 4)	1.75
SILVER SABLE #10	1.25
Sable must learn if her father is still alive.	
SLEEPWALKER #22	1.25
Hobgoblin & 8-Ball fight for the right to kill Sleepy.	
WOLVERINE #67	1.75
WONDER MAN #19	1.25
The Crazy 8s are defeated.	
X-MEN ADVENTURES #5	1.25
The Morlocks kidnap Cyclops.	

THIRD WEEK

AVENGERS #360	2.95
The Vision is replaced by an imposter.	
CLIVE BARKER'S NIGHTBREED #25	2.50
Last issue — the Nightbreed find New Midian!	
CONAN THE BARBARIAN #266	1.25
DARK ANGEL #9	1.75
DA confronts the evil forces that created her.	
DOCTOR WHO #194	4.95
DOOM 2099 #3	1.75
Can Doom retake Castle Latveria?	
EXCALIBUR #63	1.75
The return of Rachel Summers.	
FANTASTIC FOUR UNLIMITED #1	3.95
FISH POLICE #6	1.25
Inspector Gill takes on S.Q.U.A.D.	
G.I. JOE #134	1.25
Duke, Snake-Eyes & Lady Jaye battle COBRA.	
INCREDIBLE HULK #403	1.25
Premiering the new art team of Gary Frank & Cam Smith.	
INCREDIBLE HULK: FUTURE IMPERFECT #2	5.95
IRON MANUAL	1.75
MARVEL AGE #122	1.00
Including features on the X-Men & Avengers 30th anniversaries.	
MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #124	1.50
Wolverine/Lynx, She-Hulk, Solo & Wolverine/Typhoid Mary.	
MARVEL TALES #271	1.25
Including the Puma, Kingpin, Black Cat, the Rose & Hobgoblin.	
MORBIUS #7	1.75
Morbius goes to work at a hospital.	
NICK FURY AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. #45	1.75
HYDRA spies battle Nick to the death.	
PUNISHER #76	1.25
Frank tracks a drug dealer to Hawaii.	
SILVER SURFER/ADAM WARLOCK: RESURRECTION #1 (of 4)	2.50
SPIDER-MAN #32	1.75
Spidey tracks a murderous impersonator.	
WARLOCK & THE INFINITY WATCH #14	1.75
The U.N. seizes control of Monster Island.	
WHAT IF #47	1.25
X-FACTOR #88	1.25
X-Factor travels to Genosha.	
X-MEN #18	1.25
The return of Omega Red.	

BOOKS & SPECIAL COMICS

INCREDIBLE HULK BOOKSHELF: FUTURE IMPERFECT #2	5.95
The conclusion by Peter David & George Perez.	
IRON MANUAL	1.75
A technical manual of the Avenger's armor.	
MARVEL AGE PREVIEW 1993	3.95
What's new for '93!	
MARVEL MILESTONES: TALES OF SUSPENSE #39	2.95
Iron Man's first appearance.	
PUNISHER: GHOSTS OF INNOCENTS #1 (of 2)	5.95
By Jim Starlin & Tom Grindberg.	
SPIDER-MAN: THE COSMIC ADVENTURES	19.95
The 192-page "Captain Universe" saga with art by McFarlane & Larsen.	



PREMIERES

FANTASTIC FOUR UNLIMITED #1	3.95
The very first of Marvel's new deluxe quarterly anthologies.	
SECRET DEFENDERS #1	2.50
Dr. Strange assembles an eclectic team for a secret mission.	
SILVER SURFER/ADAM WARLOCK: RESURRECTION #1 (of 4)	2.50
Written and drawn by Jim Starlin.	
MYS-TECH WAR #1 (of 4)	1.75
Every Marvel US and Marvel UK hero in this monumental epic.	
TOXIC CRUSADERS #1 (of 4)	1.25
Now in their own, Kristie limited series.	

EPIC TITLES

A-1 #4 (of 4)	5.95
<i>Concluding the eclectic anthology</i>	
CLIVE BARKER'S HELLRAISER #20	4.95
<i>Featuring a new story by Neil Gaiman.</i>	
CLIVE BARKER'S NIGHTBREED #25	2.50
<i>Last issue - the Nightbreed find New Midiant!</i>	
GROO THE WANDERER #99	2.25
<i>"The Wager of the Gods."</i>	

FOURTH WEEK

A-1 #4 (of 4)	5.95
BARBIE FASHION #27	1.25
CLIVE BARKER'S HELLRAISER #20	4.95
CODENAME: GENETIX #3 (of 4)	1.75
DEATH'S HEAD II/KILLPOWER:	
BATTLETIDE #4 (of 4)	1.75
DEATHLOK #21	1.75
<i>Deathlok finds his human body.</i>	
DIGITEK #4 (of 4)	2.25
DOCTOR WHO CLASSIC COMICS #3	4.95
<i>Re-presenting classic tales of 60's & 70's.</i>	
DR. STRANGE #51	2.50
<i>A major character tragically dies.</i>	
FANTASTIC FOUR #374	1.25
THE INCOMPLETE	
DEATH'S HEAD #3 (of 12)	1.75
IRON MAN #290	2.95
MARVEL REQUIRER #36	Free
MARVEL UNIVERSE	
HANDBOOK #28	4.95
<i>Including bios of Dr. Strange, Domino, Hellfire Club, Scarecrow & Terror.</i>	
MOTORMOUTH & KILLPOWER #10	1.75
<i>The two jump back in time to the middle ages.</i>	
MYS-TECH WAR #1 (of 4)	1.75
THE 'NAM #78	1.75
<i>Ed Marks returns "in country."</i>	
NEW WARRIORS #33	1.25
PUNISHER 2099 #2	1.25
<i>Jake continues to search for his family's killer.</i>	
PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #52	1.75
<i>Frank fights white supremacists.</i>	
SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #198	1.25
SPIDER-MAN TPB:	
THE COSMIC ADVENTURES	19.95
SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #8	1.75
THOR #460	1.25
<i>The real Thor's back — and he's mad.</i>	
TOXIC CRUSADERS #1 (of 4)	1.25
VENOM #2 (of 6)	2.95
WARHEADS #10	1.75
<i>Blackheart joins the fight against Mephisto.</i>	
WILLIAM SHATNER'S	
TEK WORLD #7	1.75
<i>Concluding the "Tin Angel" story.</i>	
X-FORCE #20	1.25
<i>The team investigates Cable's secret space station.</i>	
X-MEN CLASSIC #61	1.25
<i>The team is ambushed by the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants.</i>	

MATCHES OF THE MONTH

AVENGERS WEST COAST #92	1.25
<i>Goliath vs. Power Man</i>	
CAGE #12	1.25
<i>Cage vs. Iron Fist</i>	
DARKHOLD #6	1.75
<i>Dr. Strange vs. Modred</i>	
DOOM 2099 #3	1.75
<i>Doom vs. Tiger Wyld</i>	
FANTASTIC FOUR #374	1.25
<i>The FF vs. the "new" FF</i>	
FANTASTIC FOUR UNLIMITED #1	3.95
<i>Black Panther vs. Klaw</i>	
GHOST RIDER #35	1.75
<i>GR vs. Heart Attack.</i>	
INCREDIBLE HULK #403	1.25
<i>Hulk vs. the Avengers</i>	
MORBIUS #7	1.75
<i>Morbus vs. Vic Slaughter & the Hardcases</i>	
QUASAR #44	1.25
<i>Quasar vs. Quagmire</i>	
SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #198	1.25
<i>Spidey & the X-Men vs. Professor Power</i>	
SPIDER-MAN 2099 #5	1.25
<i>Spidey vs. the Specialist</i>	
SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #8	1.75
<i>GR & Blaze vs. Mephisto</i>	
UNCANNY X-MEN #298	1.25
<i>X-Men vs. the Acolytes</i>	
X-FACTOR #88	1.25
<i>X-Factor vs. the New Gengineer</i>	



SPECIAL COVERS

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #375	3.95
<i>This landmark issue features a metallic holo-graph cover.</i>	
AVENGERS #360	2.95
<i>Foil embossed bronze cover</i>	
DARKHAWK #25	2.95
<i>Including a red foil cover effect and gatefold poster.</i>	
INCREDIBLE HULK:	
FUTURE IMPERFECT #2	5.95
<i>Featuring an embossed cover image of the Maestro</i>	
IRON MAN #290	2.95
<i>Gold foil adorns this double-sizer.</i>	
SECRET DEFENDERS #1	2.50
<i>Special foil-stamped premiere.</i>	





JANUARY

D. AUCK / M. KRAIGER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
HAPPY BELATED BIRTHDAY TO: JON BABCOCK 12-1 MICHAEL HOBSON 12-8 JOSE DELBO 12-9 JOHN BUSCEMA 12-11	MARY MCPHERRAN 12-11 MICHAEL KRAIGER 12-15 HILLY MESNIK 12-16 MARK TEXIERA 12-17 ELIOT BROWN 12-19 MARIA PARWULSKI 12-20	JOHN SEVERIN 12-21 GREG WRIGHT 12-22 ED LAZELLARI 12-23 JOE ROSEN 12-25 ED MURR 12-26 STEVE SAFFEL 12-26	MARK POWERS 12-26 JANICE CHIANG 12-28 RALPH MACCHIO 12-28 PAUL BECTON 12-29 BARRY DUTTER 12-29 FABIAN NICIEZA 12-31	1 NEW YEARS DAY	2	HAPPY BIRTHDAY DON HECK
BUD LAROSA TOM ARTIS	CHIC STONE	FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE SKRULLS #1 #2 JAN. 1962 		BOB WIACEK MARIA MCCANN	KEN STEACY JOHN WELLINGTON VALERIE HAYNES HOLLY REANDEAU	BLACK KNIGHT DEBUTS IN AVENGERS #48 1968 
3 BOB HARRAS BRAD JOYCE	4	MILT SHIFFMAN TOM YEATES JOE STATON	KEITH POLLARD ERIKA HARRIS	7 RUDY NEBRES JOHN TARTAGLIONE CHANTE FOSTER	8 KEVIN TINSLEY BOB PETRECCA	
10 TOM BREVOORT	11 BOB RISCICA	19 SAL BUSCEMA	MARTIN LUTHER 20 KING JR. DAY	14	15 HOWARD MACKIE MARSHALL ROGERS CAROL PLATT	KLAUS JANSON
17 JOHN ROMITA ED JOHNSON	31	26	27 STEVE LEIALOHA FRANK MILLER ROB DYRENFORTH	21 	22 TINK	23 FRED HEMBECK DENYS COWAN DANN THOMAS
24 PATY	25	26	27	30	30	30